

# Ten Things You Need to Know about Immunizations

- 1. Why your child should be immunized**  
Children need immunizations (shots) to protect them from dangerous childhood diseases. These diseases can have serious complications and even kill children.
- 2. Diseases that childhood vaccines prevent**
  - Measles
  - Mumps
  - Polio
  - Rubella (German Measles)
  - Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
  - Diphtheria
  - Tetanus (Lockjaw)
  - *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib disease - a major cause of bacterial meningitis)
  - Hepatitis B
  - Varicella (chickenpox)
  - Pneumococcal (causes bacterial meningitis and blood infections)
- 3. Number of shots your child needs**  
The following vaccinations are recommended by age two and can be given over five visits to a doctor or clinic:
  - 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus & pertussis vaccine (DTaP)
  - 4 doses of Hib vaccine
  - 4 doses of pneumococcal vaccine
  - 3 doses of polio vaccine
  - 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine
  - 1 dose of measles, mumps & rubella vaccine (MMR)
  - 1 dose of varicella vaccine
- 4. Like any medicine, there may be minor side effects**  
Side effects can occur with any medicine, including vaccines. Depending on the vaccine, these can include: slight fever, rash, or soreness at the site of injection. Slight discomfort is normal and should not be a cause for alarm. Your health care provider can give you additional information.
- 5. It's extremely rare, but vaccines can cause serious reactions -- weigh the risks!**  
Serious reactions to vaccines are extremely rare. The risks of serious disease from not vaccinating are far greater than the risks of serious reaction to a vaccination.
- 6. What to do if your child has a serious reaction.**  
If you think your child is experiencing a persistent or severe reaction, call your doctor or get the child to a doctor right away. Write down what happened and the date and time it happened. Ask your doctor, nurse or health department to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report form or call 1-800-338-2382 to file this form yourself.
- 7. Why you should not wait to vaccinate**  
Children under 5 are especially susceptible to disease because their immune systems have not built up the necessary defenses to fight infection. By immunizing on time (by age 2), you can protect your child from disease and also protect others at school or daycare.
- 8. Be sure to track your shots via a health record**  
A vaccination health record helps you and your health care provider keep your child's vaccinations on schedule. If you move or change providers, having an accurate record might prevent your child from repeating vaccinations he or she has already had. A shot record should be started when your child receives his/her first vaccination and updated with each vaccination visit.
- 9. Some are eligible for free vaccinations**  
A federal program called Vaccines for Children provides free vaccines to eligible children, including those without health insurance coverage, all those who are enrolled in Medicaid, American Indians and Alaskan Natives.
- 10. More information is available.**  
Call the National Immunization Information Hotline.
  - 1-800-232-2522 (English)
  - 1-800-232-0233 (Spanish)

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (accessed 4/29/02)

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